(c) whether Government has received the feedback by the Planning experts;

(d) if so, the main points mentioned in the report;

(e) to what extent the schemes have been successfully implemented; and

(f) whether any improvement is being considered to achieve the aims and objects of these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) In May 2008, Planning Commission had requested its Advisers to visit States to review 12 key flagship Centrally Sponsored Schemes and submit reports to the Member, Planning Commission. However, in July 2008 it was decided that Members would visit the States to review Bharat Nirman and other flagship programmes and give their reports to Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission.

(c) Members, Planning Commission have visited various States including Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand and submitted reports to the Deputy Chairman regarding implementation of flagship programmes e.g. Prime Minister's Grameen Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-day Meal etc.

(d) to (f) The pace of progress in implementation of flagship programme varies across States, some of which have displayed appreciable improvement. During discussions, Members have advised State Governments on implementation of schemes including, addressing the problem of teacher absenteeism and poor quality of education in SSA, promoting institutional delivery under NRHM, monitoring the quality of construction and maintenance of roads under PMGSY and undertaking independent evaluation of schemes from time to time.

Seajack of Indian merchant ships

†1188. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:
SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of merchant ships alongwith their crew members have been seajacked recently by pirates in African marine region;

(b) whether Indian nationals also formed a part of the crew members;

(c) if so, what measures are being taken to rescue them; and

(d) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) Government have been pressing the owners and Governments of flag states of hijacked vessels to secure the release of the Indian nationals on board the hijacked vessels quickly. Diplomatic channels are used to mount pressure on them. The following preventive steps have been taken to protect the Indian flag vessels—

(1) Movement of Indian flag vessels is closely monitored in known piracy infested areas through regular contact between the Directorate General Communication Centre and the vessels' Ship Security Alert System.

(2) Indian Navy has deployed warship to patrol the Maritime Security Patrol Area in the Gulf of Aden. Indian ships along with foreign ships with Indian nationals have been informed of the same so that they can take advantage of the warship's presence while transiting through Gulf of Aden.

(3) India's position is that greater coordination is needed under the umbrella of the United Nations so that countries and organizations contributing warships such as North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Operation Atlanta of the European Union and warships of individual nations, including India, could coordinate efforts aimed at enhancing the security of these sea lanes. Further, the international community, having recognized this problem brought this issue up in the Security Council of the United Nations which adopted four resolutions in 2008. India has contacted several countries to support this approach.

NH projects

1189. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present number of National Highway (NH) Projects in India indicating their position, State-wise and investment-wise;

(b) the work in progress, maintenance and pending projects yet to be completed; and

(c) the new road projects undertaken by Government during the last four years, State-wise and year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Bridge over Brahmaputra

1190. SHRI MUKUT MITHI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister during his recent visit to Assam had announced the construction of fifth bridge over Brahmaputra at Saikhowa to connect Sadiya Sub-division of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh;